

**PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO SUPPRESS
FOR NOMENCLATORIAL PURPOSES A PAPER BY FOR-
STER (J. R.) CONTAINING NEW NAMES FOR CERTAIN
AUSTRALIAN BIRDS PUBLISHED IN 1794 IN VOLUME 5
OF THE "MAGAZIN VON MERKWÜRDIGEN NEUEN REISE
BESCHREIBUNGEN"**

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The occasional discovery of long-forgotten scientific names has been exceedingly unsettling for scientific nomenclature. To correct this evil, the International Zoological Congress at Monaco adopted in 1913 the so-called Monaco Resolution which permits the setting aside of the Rule of Priority whenever its application results clearly in greater confusion than uniformity. Even though this opportunity to save well-established names has been available since 1913, ornithologists have only rarely taken advantage of it. The International Ornithological Congress at Uppsala, 1950, appointed a committee of bird taxonomists to collaborate with the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature and, in particular, to call attention to names which are in need of preservation in accordance with the Monaco Resolution.

2. The names of some Australian birds seem to require action under the Monaco Resolution. In 1937 (*Emu* **37**: 95-99) Tom Iredale called attention to an overlooked paper by J. R. Forster published in 1794 in German as an appendix to a description of the new British colonies in Australia (*Magazin von merkwürdigen neuen Reise Beschreibungen* **5**: 128). This publication contains fifteen new scientific names which were analysed by Iredale who found that only four have priority over names now in use. Furthermore, one of them, namely *Alcedo collaris* Forster, 1794, is a homonym of *Alcedo collaris* Scopoli, 1786 (*Deliciae Florae Faunae insubricae* **2**: 90) and was therefore stillborn at the time of its publication.

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3. Iredale analysed in detail the status of the other three names with the following results :—

(1) *Turdus phaeus* Forster, 1794, has seven years' priority over *Turdus harmonicus* Latham, 1801 (*Index Orn.*, Suppl. : xii), the well-known name of the Grey Shrikethrush called *Colluricincla harmonica* for over 130 years. To replace this well-established name at the present time would clearly be most unfortunate, and we request therefore the International Commission to make use of its plenary powers to place the name *Turdus harmonicus* Latham, 1801, on the list of *nomina conservanda* and the name *Turdus phaeus* Forster, 1794, on the list of *nomina rejecta*.

(2) Action in the second case is even more important. Forster gives the name *Motacilla elegans* to the bird now called *Malurus cyaneus australis* North, 1904. If Forster's name is accepted this bird would receive the name *Malurus cyaneus elegans* Forster. However, Gould proposed the name *Malurus elegans* in 1837 for a Western Australian bird for which it has been in use for more than 100 years. A transfer of the name *elegans* from the Western Australian species to the eastern one would cause severe confusion. We request therefore the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to make use of its plenary powers and place *Malurus elegans* Gould, 1837 (*Birds Austr.* (1) : pl. 2) on the list of *nomina conservanda* and *Motacilla elegans* Forster, 1794, on the list of *nomina rejecta*.

(3). The third name is *Muscicapa chlorotis* Forster, 1794, for a bird generally called *Muscicapa* [= *Meliphaga*] *chrysops* (Latham, 1801) (= *Sylvia chrysops* Latham, 1801, *Index Ornith.*, Suppl. : liv), but which Iredale states to be antedated by *Muscicapa novaehollandiae* Latham, 1790 (*Index Orn.* : 478).

4. **Recommendation** ; The publication in which Forster proposes these names is apparently exceedingly rare. It does not appear to be in the library of the British Museum (Natural History), and these scientific names are not included in Sherborn's *Index Animalium*. The simplest way to deal with this publication would be to classify all the names published in this volume as *nomina rejecta*. The ornithologists whose names appear at the head of this application suggest this action to the International Commission.